

Mastering Equipment Used In Our Recordings

Digital: Weiss ADC2 Analog to Digital Converter

Mytek ADC192 Modified by Steve Nugent of Empirical Audio

Lynx AES16 used for digital I/O

Antelope Audio Isochrone OCX Master Clock

Weiss Saracon Sample Rate Conversion Software

Weiss POW-r Dithering Software

Analog: Studer 810 Reel to Reel with JRF Magnetics Custom Z Heads & Siltech wiring

Aria tape head pre-amp by ATR Services

Manley Tube Tape Pre-amps Modified by Fred Volz of Emotive Audio

Cables: Purist Audio Design, Pure Note, Siltech

Power Cords: Purist Audio Design, Essential Sound Products

Vibration Control: Symposium Acoustics Rollerblocks, Ultra platforms, Svelte shelves

Sonic Studio CD.1 Professional CD Burner using Mitsui Gold Archival CD's

Facts about this Recording

Recorded by Decca/London

Peer Gynt • Recorded Feb 17-19 1958 Kingsway Hall, London

Producer: Christopher Raeburn • Engineer: Cyril Windebank & Alan Reeve

Camen Suite • Recorded Jan. 4-5 1967 Kingsway Hall, London

Producer: Tony D'Amato • Engineer: Arthur Lilley

GRIEG PEER GYNT

OIVIN FIELDSTADT
LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CHARLES MUNCH
NEW PHILHARMONIA ORHestra

BIZET CARMEN SUITE



Edvard Grieg will forever be associated with Norway and Norwegian Folk Music. He is in fact of Scottish descent, his great grandfather having left Scotland after the Battle of Culloden to settle in Norway. Although the family tradition was the post of British Consul in Bergen passed down through three generations, other careers seemed more suitable to the young Edvard. His mother taught him to play the piano, and his skill on that instrument was quickly recognised by the violinist Ole Bull (a relative by marriage) who encouraged his musical talents. On Bull's recommendation, Grieg was sent to study at the Leipzig Conservatory which had been founded by Mendelssohn. Although he didn't like his time there, and developed pleurisy which irreversibly weakened his lungs, the experience certainly influenced his future musical development. At Leipzig he was a contemporary of Arthur Sullivan and he attended performances given by Wagner and heard Clara Schumann play her late husband's (Robert Schumann's) Piano Concerto.

On

leaving Leipzig he returned firstly to Copenhagen in Denmark where he met Niels Gade and made friends with Rikard Nordraak who wrote the Norwegian National Anthem. Although Bull was also a champion of Norwegian music, it was largely Gade's influence that was

to persuade Grieg to look to the folk music of his native land, and perhaps the fact that Norway was ruled by Sweden for much of Grieg's life was also to bring out the nationalist in him. (Prior to that Norway had been subject to Danish rule.)

Against their families' wishes Edvard married his cousin, Nina Naderup who was a singer, and they settled initially in Oslo (then called Christiania). Tragedy struck again when their only daughter died from meningitis at the age of 13 months. His wife was a major inspiration to Grieg and he composed many songs for her. Franz Liszt had heard Grieg's music, gave him encouragement and invited him to visit Liszt in Rome. There the story is that Grieg presented the older composer with a handwritten copy of his new Piano Concerto which Liszt performed fluently from sight.

Grieg returned to Norway with a new confidence, founded the Norwegian Academy of Music and gave the first official performance of the Piano Concerto. Another major turning point in his career was that the poet Henrik Ibsen contacted him and asked him to provide incidental music for "Peer Gynt" which was to become very popular. Grieg became celebrated across Europe and was given an annuity by the government which allowed him to give up teaching and concentrate on composing and promoting his music through concert tours. Grieg's music was much admired by other composers, including Brahms and Tchaikovsky. He toured many European cities including several visits to England where he received honorary degrees from both Oxford and Cambridge. Grieg's marriage went through a rocky period, perhaps resulting from his performing career conflicting with his wife's singing engagements, but the couple patched things up and remained together until his death in 1907. It is thought that his weakened health and the demands of his tours as a pianist contributed to his final collapse. The couple are now buried in a tomb in the mountainside near Trolldhaugen, their main summer home a few miles South of Bergen.

Georges Bizet's life was short and full of difficulties, a fact that seems at odds with the enduring success of his final work, Carmen. Bizet was born into a musical family, where he received a good early training that led to his entrance into the Paris Conservatory at the age of nine. Bizet did well in his studies, developing his skills as a pianist (he impressed Franz Liszt with his playing) and as a composer. At the age of seventeen he composed his Symphony in C, a meticulous and effervescent work that was never heard until 1935. His studies at the conservatory were capped in 1858 with his receipt of the Prix de Rome, which allowed Bizet three years of financial support to concentrate on composition.

Bizet's years in Rome were not very productive, and resulted in few works -- only four of which survive. One, his opera Don Procopio, was not produced until 1906. Upon his return to Paris he turned down a teaching position at the conservatory, wishing instead to concentrate on his writing. He found moderate success in 1863 with his opera Les pêcheurs de perles, but his next work, La jolie fille de Perth, saw only eighteen performances.

Bizet's final years were marked by more problems: ill health and forced service during the Franco-Prussian war took their toll on the composer. In 1875, he completed a work that should have been his great triumph and the beginning of an illustrious career, his opera Carmen. In this opera, Bizet shows both a sure dramatic hand and mastery of the musical demands of the genre. The story of Carmen, however, proved too much for the Parisian audience (especially in a theater designed to appeal to families). Set in Spain and dealing with the exotic culture of the Gypsies, the story presented Bizet with the opportunity to create a rich musical score full of foreign flavor then in vogue. But the plot's exploration of sexual desire, moral ambiguity and a brutal murder insured a brief and controversial run. Bitterly dejected by this supreme blow, Bizet's health deteriorated quickly, and less than three months later he died of a heart attack. Ironically, only five years later the work returned to the Parisian stage after a series of successes in Vienna, Brussels, London and New York. It has, from that time on, remained one of the best loved of all nineteenth century operas.

Grieg's Peer Gynt

Oivin Fjeldstad conducts The London Symphony Orchestra

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| 1-Prelude 5:09 | 6-Ingrid's Abduction and Lament 3:49 |
| 2-Morning Mood 4:35 | 7-Arab Dance 4:42 |
| 3-The Death of Ase 4:35 | 8-Peer Gynt's Home-Coming 2:41 |
| 4-Anita's Dance 3:32 | 9-Solvejg's Song 5:51 |
| 5-In the Hall of the Mountain King 2:45 | 10-Dance of the Mountain Kings Daughter 1:53 |

Bizet Carmen Suite

Charles Munch Conducts New Philharmonia Orchestra

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| 11-Chanson du Toreador 2:22 | 15-Entracte Les Dragons d'Alcala 1:38 |
| 12-Prelude 1:59 | 16-Habanera 2:05 |
| 13-Entracte Aragonaise 2:14 | 17-Avec la garde Montante 3:37 |
| 14-Entracte Intermezzo 2:23 | 18-Danse Boheme 4:36 |

Peer Gynt was transferred from a London 4-track Tape Recorded 1961
Carmen was transferred from a London 4-track Tape Recorded 1966

Please Note: In the interest of preserving the superb sound quality of these historic recordings, they have been preserved in their original, pristine state for maximum fidelity. Transferred from commercially released, analog reel-to-reel tapes (some of which are more than 50 years old), the recordings themselves can be subject to certain "artifacts" which are an inseparable part of the original analog recording process, such as tape "hiss" or other defects, and these may be audible on certain music tracks.

Because your CD or DVD-A was individually "burned" in order to realize superior sound quality to stamped, mass-produced versions, microscopic cosmetic blemishes may be visible. Please regard these tiny marks as evidence of the "human touch" in the care and individual attention that each and every HDTT disc receives during its very demanding manufacturing process.